

THE
COUNTRY WIFE,

COMEDY

IN TWO ACTS

As it is performed at the

Theatre-Royal in *Drury-Lane*.

(Altered from WYCHERLEY.)

“ Blame not the Poets; they must copy the Age!”

“ Don’t ye give Money to the Painters to draw

“ your Like, and are ye afraid to see your Pictures

“ at full Length in the Playhouse?”

“ Ay; but, then, the Painters don’t

“ draw Pimples, or the Small-pox.”

WYCHERLEY.

L O N D O N:

Printed for the EDITOR, and sold by him, at
La Grange’s Medicinal Warehouse, in
New-Street, Covent-Garden.

[Price One Shilling]

THE
COUNTRY WIFE

A
COMEDY

IN TWO ACTS



Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.
This Book is entered at Stationers-
Hall, and whoever pirates it will
be prosecuted.



Printed by W. Johnston, at the Theatre-Royal, in Drury-Lane.
1733.

LONDON:
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1733.

ADVERTISEMENT

Persons Represented.

MEN.

SPARRISH,

Mr. King.

PINCHWIFE,

Mr. Lee.

HARCOURT,

DORILANT,

Mr. Packer,

Servant to HARCOURT.

Mr. Watkins.

WOMEN.

ALITHEA,

Mrs. Hopkins,

MARGERY PINCHWIFE,

Miss Slack,

SCENE, LONDON.

TIME, the Forenoon.

ADVERTISEMENT.

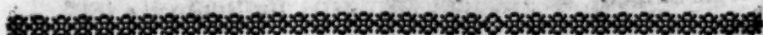
THE following Scenes, being intended for a Representation upon a Benefit Night only, were compil'd with so much Haste and Inaccuracy, that several Mistakes in the Copy were obliged to be rectified. (See the subjoin'd *Errata*.) Many Characters of the original Comedy are left out, for Reasons that will be obvious to all who may chuse to read the Play itself; and such as are retained will, it is hoped, be thought, at least, inoffensively humorous.

ERRATA.

- Page 2 last line but two, for *five* read *nine*.
- 4 fourth line, for *Evening* read *Morning*, and last line but two, for *Ned* read *Frank*.
- 5 second line, for *To-morrow*, read *this Morning*.
- 9 fifth line, for *Ned* read *Frank*.
- 10 last line but four, for *Ned* read *Frank*.
- 11 last line but six, for *Afternoon*, read *Forenoon*.
- 23 first line, for *has W* read *has it W*.
- 29 last line of the first Act, for *ever breath'd*, read *that ever breath'd*.
- 33 first line, for *Ned*, read *George*.
- 45 Add at Bottom, *Can one have no Jest?—Ah! a London woman would*
- 49 fourth line, for *next room*, read *dining-room*.
- 53 fifth line, for *Chap-fallen* read *Crest-fallen*.



T H E
C O U N T R Y W I F E.



A C T. I. SCENE HARCOURT's Lodgings.

HARCOURT and DORILANT are discovered.

HARCOURT.

WELL, a plague of all love and wenching, say I !
W Women serve but to keep a man from better
company : Wine, wine and good fellowship
are lasting, rational, and manly pleasures.

DORILANT.

For all that, give me some of those pleasures you call
effeminate too : They help to relish one another.

HARCOURT,

They disturb one another.

DORILANT.

No, *Frank*, mistresses are like books : if you pore upon
them too much, they doze you, and make you unfit for
company ; but if us'd discreetly, you are the fitter for con-
versation by 'em.

HAR-

HARCOURT.

Right, so far I agree,—a mistress shou'd be like a little snug country retreat near town ; not to dwell at constantly, but only for a night, and away, to taste the town the better when a man returns.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Mr. *Sparkish* is below, Sir.

HARCOURT.

What; my dear friend?—a rogue that is fond of me, only for abusing him, I think.

DORILANT.

Oh, that's because he don't see it; for *Sparkish* can no more think the men laugh at him, than that the women jilt him ; his opinion of himself is so good.

HARCOURT.

Did you say I was at home?

SERVANT.

No, Sir.

HARCOURT.

Then tell him I'm gone out,—to meet him, you believe;—for I left word, I should be at the *Cocoa-Tree* at five o'clock.

SERVANT.

Yes, Sir——

[Exit.

HAR-

HARCOURT.

There's no being free from him long ;—he's one of those nauseous offerers at wit, who, like the worst fiddlers, will thrust themselves into all people's houses.

DORILANT.

And whose company would be as troublesome to us, as a cuckold's, when you want his wife's.

HARCOURT.

Who knows but that may be the case soon, *Ned!* for he's going to be married.

DORILANT.

Sparkish?——to whom?

HARCOURT.

To a lady of wit, beauty, and fortune ;—at least, I've his own word for 'em all.

DORILANT.

Possibly ; but I'm sure she must want one of 'em, if she chooses him.

HARCOURT.

Well, don't disparage him too much neither? for he has a virtue that would recommend him to any woman.

DORILANT.

Name it?

HARCOURT.

Credulity.

Dor-

DORILANT.

Oh, I beg you pardon;—and, if she's a right woman, she'll put it to the stretch!—who is she?

HARCOURT.

One that I am to be better acquainted with soon; for he's to introduce me to her this very evening.

DORILANT.

For heaven's sake, *Frank*, rescue her; be charitable;—set her up in the lottery of love, and let's you and I draw for the prize?

HARCOURT.

No, *Ned*, you are too fortunate for me to cope with that way:—

Enter Pinchwife.

Who have we here? *Pinchwife*?

PINCHWIFE.

Gentlemen, your Servant.

DORILANT.

Sir, your humble servant.

HARCOURT.

Well, *Jack*, by thy long absence from town, the grumpiness of thy countenance, and the slovenliness of thy habit; I shou'd give thee joy, shou'd I not, of marriage?

PINCHWIFE.

'Sdeath!—does he know it, or is it only guess. [*Aside.*] Oh! as to dress, *Ned*, my long stay in the country will excuse my dress; then, I have a Suit of Law that brings me

me up to town, that puts me out of humour ; and besides I must give *Sparkish* to-morrow five thousand pounds to marry my sister !

DORILANT.

So, now the secret's out, who it is,

[*Aside.*

HARCOURT.

O ho ! his sister ! [*Aside*] nay, you country gentlemen, rather than not purchase, will buy any thing ; for he is but a crack'd title, if we may be allow'd to quibble.—Well, but, am I to give thee joy ? For I heard *thou* wert marry'd.

PINCHWIFE.

What then ?

HARCOURT.

Why then, the next thing that is to be heard, is, thou'rt a cuckold.

PINCHWIFE.

Insupportable name !

[*Aside.*

HARCOURT.

But—married ?—I did not expect marriage from such a debauchee as thou art, one who knew the town so well ?

PINCHWIFE.

Why, I have married no *London* wife, I took care o' that !

HARCOURT.

Pshaw ! that's all one : your grave circumspection in marrying one of your rustic innocents, is like refusing a deceitful pamper'd *Smithfield* jade, to go down and be cheated by a friend in the country.

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

A Pox on him and his simile too; however, I'll answer him accordingly [*Aside*.] She has no beauty but her youth, no attraction but her modesty; wholesome, homely, and housewifely; that's all.

DORILANT.

He talks, as like a grassier, as he looks. [*Aside*

HARCOURT.

But let us see her, and judge for ourselves; is she in town.

PINCHWIFE.

No, no, she's too aukward, ill-favour'd, and silly for that.

DORILANT.

Then methinks you should bring her, Sir, to be taught breeding.

PINCHWIFE.

To be taught! No, Sir, I thank you, good wives and private soldiers should always be kept ignorant.

HARCOURT.

But prithee, why did'st marry her? If she be so ugly, ill-bred and silly?—she must be rich then?

PINCHWIFE.

As rich as if she brought me twenty thousand pounds out of this town; for she'll be as sure not to spend her moderate portion, as a *London* baggage wou'd be to spend hers, let it be what it wou'd: So 'tis all one. Then, being ugly, she's the likelier to be my own; being ill-bred, she'll hate
con.

conversation ; and, being silly and innocent, why, she'll know no difference 'twixt a man of one and twenty, and one of forty.—

HARCOURT.

Nine—to my knowledge, *Jack!*—But, if she be as silly as you say she is, take care—she'll expect as much from a man of forty-nine, as from one of five and twenty.

DORILANT.

Methinks wit is more necessary than beauty ; and I think no young woman ugly that has it, nor any handsome woman agreeable without it.

PINCHWIFE.

There we differ, Sir, 'twas ever my maxim, that he's fool enough who marries a fool ; but he's a much greater that don't marry one.—What is wit in a wife good for, but to make a man a cuckold.

DORILANT.

Yes, to keep it from his knowledge.

PINCHWIFE.

Poh !——A fool can't contrive to make her husband a cuckold.

HARCOURT.

No, but she'll club with a man that can;—or, what's worse, if she can't do that, she'll make him jealous, and pass for one ; then, 'tis all the same.

PINCHWIFE.

Well, well ; I'll take care for one :—My wife shall make me no cuckold, I'll answer for't, tho' she had your help, Mr. *Harcourt*. I know the town, Sir.

HAR-

HARCOURT.

But was'nt the way you were in before, *Jack*, better?
—Is'nt keeping better than marriage?

PINCHWIFE.

I don't know. but it might, if one could keep a wench
to oneself.

HARCOURT.

So, then you've only married to keep a wench to your-
self?—Ha! ha! ha!

DORILANT.

Which I don't doubt but your friend will be very suc-
cessful in.

PINCHWIFE.

Sir!

DORILANT.

I say, Sir, that you gave very good tokens of your pre-
caution last night; for you was extremely careful of the
lady you accompany'd to the play.

PINCHWIFE.

(*Aside.*

The devil!—how mischances swarm in this curs'd town!
—I wish the playhouse had been in Flames!

DORILANT.

No *Italian* husband could have play'd the guardian more
faithfully.—Perhaps, you don't remember me, Sir?

PINCHWIFE.

Indeed, Sir, but I do,—*too well.*

HARCOURT.

Why,—a—gentlemen,—why—what is all this?

HAR-

PINCHWIFE.

It'll be blown, I see, that's she's in town, to the whole corporation of cuckold-makers. [Aside.]

HARCOURT.

The play! why, what dost blush, man (at nine and forty) to be seen with a wench at the play?

DORILANT.

No, *Ned*, if your friend blushes, 'tis at being seen there with his wife; for men are, now-a-days, more ashamed of *them*, than of a wench!

PINCHWIFE.

Hell and confusion!—I'm in a fine situation, since they know 'twas she. [Aside.]

HARCOURT.

But, prithee, own it, *Jack*!—Was it thy wife or not?

DORILANT.

She was excessive pretty!—I thought so, even at a distance.

PINCHWIFE.

May be so, Sir, for which reason you are never like to come near her again!—So, your servant, both!—

HARCOURT

Nay, prithee, stay a little?—

PINCHWIFE.

I can't now——

HARCOURT.

Come, you shall dine with us, at *Almack's*?

C

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

I have din'd already !

HARCOURT.

That thou hast not, I know ; so I'll treat thee ;—come dear rogue ! Thou shalt spend none of thy *Hampshire* money to-day !

PINCHWIFE.

Treat me ?—He uses me already like his cuckold.

[*Aside.*]

HARCOURT.

Nay, you shan't go, positively.

PINCHWIFE.

But positively I *must* go, and will ; for I have business at home. (*Exit.*)

DORILANT.

To beat his wife, I suppose ; ha ! ha ! ha !—For he is as jealous of her, as a *Cheapside* husband of a *Covent-Garden* miss.

HARCOURT.

Pray, tell me, *Dorilant*, you have seen this little moppet of his ?—Is she really pretty ?

DORILANT.

Oh ! beyond description, *Ned*, lovely as the morning ; and, like that, the more so for her blushes !—She's a *Pomona* !—Nature's triumph over art !—Possessing, without one acquired grace, all the charms that can bewitch and kindle up desire !—In short, she is——

HAR-

HARCOURT.

Nay, dear *Ned*, stop,—do, take some tragedy speech to your relief? There's *Dryden*, *Otway*, and the golden *Rowe*, all at your Service. [Bantering.]

DORILANT.

Oh, she's beyond their reach!—So sweet, so innocent, so soft—and so complying—

HARCOURT.

There you've hit it, *Ned*!—that's her greatest merit with you, we know.

DORILANT.

I must see her once more, now I know who she is, or perish with despair,

HARCOURT.

Well, well — come, don't be frighted!—take heart! thou shalt see her once again, if it be only to plague that surly tyrant her husband,—

DORILANT.

But how? how? When, my dear *Harcourt*?

HARCOURT.

Why, *Sparkish* is to be married, you hear, to her sister-in-law this afternoon; now, the devil must be in *Pinchwife* if he keeps her from the wedding;—so, do you find out *Sparkish*, and get an invitation from him;—It's no favour, I assure you; for he's such a coxcomb, he'd make a shew of his bride to the whole town, if she'd let him. I am now going to the *Cocoa-Tree*; do you, I say, throw yourself in our way, when we return, and, I warrant you, the bait takes!

DORI

DORILANT.

I'll do't ;—S'death ! I shall never drive her from my thoughts !—her dress—so suited to her form !—her manner, so unaffected !—

HARCOURT.

Had you any discourse with her ?

DORILANT.

Oh, yes, for a few minutes ; while her Bashaw was gone out for a coach.

HARCOURT.

Where did she sit ?

DORILANT.

In the gallery, three rows behind me ;—but presently the churl came back again, and, with a grunt, whip'd her under his arm, and carried her off in triumph.

HARCOURT.

Well, who knows but we may triumph in our turn ?—I'll expect you ?

DORILANT.

With more swiftness than time, he may halt, but *Cupid's* wings outfly imagination ! Adieu.

Exeunt severally.

SCENE PINCHWIFE'S Lodgings.

Enter ALITHEA and MARGERY PINCHWIFE.

MARGERY.

Pray, sister, where are the best fields and woods to walk in, in London ?

ALI-

ALITHEA.

A pretty question ! [*Aside.*] Why, Sister, there's *Islington* and *Chelsea* fields, and *St. James's Park* :—and then, for close walks, there's the *White-Conduit-House*, and *Ranelagh* !

MARGERY.

I wonder what makes my husband look so grum here in town, and keep me up so close; that he won't let me go a-walking, nor wear my best gown!

ALITHEA.

O, he's jealous, sister.

MARGERY.

Jealous! What's that?

ALITHEA.

Why, he's afraid you should love another man?

MARGERY.

How shou'd he be afraid of that, when he won't let me see any other man?

ALITHEA.

Did'nt he carry you yesterday to a play?

MARGERY.

Ay; but then we set among all the ugly people: He wou'd not let me come near the gentry, who sat under us, so that I cou'd not see them. He told me none but naughty women sat there, whom they tous'd and mous'd:—But I wou'd have ventur'd, for all that.

ALITHEA.

And how did you like the play?

MAR-

MARGERY.

Why, as to that matter, I was a-weary of the play; but then I lik'd hugely the actors: They are the goodliest, properest men, sister!——

ALITHEA.

O, but you must not like the actors.

MARGERY.

No? Why, how could I help it, when they were all dress'd and glitter'd like any thing!——Sister, when my husband comes in, will you ask leave for me to go a walking with you?

ALITHEA.

A walking, ha, ha: a country gentlewoman's pleasure is the drudgery of a foot-post; and she requires as much airing as her husband's coach horses!—(*Aside.*)—Here comes your husband: I'll ask, tho' I'm sure he'll not grant it.—

MARGERY.

No; for he says he won't let me go abroad, for fear of my catching the small pox.

Enter Mr. PINCHWIFE.

O my dear, dear Bud, welcome home: Why dost look so fropish? who has nanger'd thee?

PINCHWIFE.

You're a fool.

MARGERY.

[*Goes aside and cries.*]

How can you go for to call one so?

ALI-

ALITHEA.

Faith, so she is, for crying for no fault, poor tender creature !

PINCHWIFE.

What, you'd have her as forward as yourself, I warrant ?

ALITHEA.

Brother, you are my only censurer ; and the honour of your family will sooner suffer in your wife there, than in me, tho' I take the innocent liberty of the town.

PINCHWIFE.

Hark you, madam, don't talk so before my wife : The innocent liberty of the Town !—Yes, she's the worse, I believe, already for your *town-documents*. I bid you keep her in ignorance, as I do.

MARGERY.

Indeed, now, don't be angry with her, bud, for she won't tell me nothing of the town, tho' I ask her a thousand times a-day.

PINCHWIFE.

You do ?—Then you *are* inquisitive to know, I find ?

MARGERY.

No, not I, indeed, dear ; I hate *London* : I'm sure our place-house in the country is worth a thousand of't ; wou'd I were there again !

PINCHWIFE.

And so you shall soon, I warrant. But were you not talking of plays and players when I came in ? You are her encourager in such discourses.

MAR-

MARGERY.

No, indeed, dear, she chid me just now for liking the player-men.

PINCHWIFE.

Nay, if she's so innocent as to own to me her liking of 'em, there's no great hurt in't—[*Aside.*] Well, well, come, my poor rogue, thou lik'st none better than me, I'm sure?

MARGERY.

Yes, indeed, but I do; the player-men are finer folks.

PINCHWIFE.

But you love none better than me?

MARGERY.

Oh, you—you, you know, are my own dear bud, and I know you: I hate a stranger.

PINCHWIFE.

That's right:—you must love me only; and not be like the naughty town-women, who only hate their husbands, and love every man else.

MARGERY.

Ay!

PINCHWIFE.

Love plays, visits, fine coaches, fine cloaths, fiddles, balls, treats, and so lead a wicked town life.

MARGERY.

Nay, if to enjoy all these things be a town-life, London is 'nt so bad a place, neither!

ALL-

ALITHEA.

The fool has forbid me discovering to her the pleasures of the town, and he is now setting her agog himself. *Aside.*

MARGERY.

But, husband, do the town-women love the player-men too?

PINCHWIFE.

Yes, I warrant you.

MARGERY.

Ay, I warrant you.

PINCHWIFE.

Why, you don't, I hope?

MARGERY.

No, bud, no, not I;—But why have we no player-men in the country?

PINCHWIFE.

How?—hark you, Mrs. Minx, ask me no more to go to a play.

MARGERY.

Nay, why so, Love? I did not care for going before, but when you forbid me, it makes one, as'twere, desire it.

ALITHEA.

So 'twill be in other matters, I warrant.

[*Aside.*

MARGERY.

Pray let me go to a play, dear?

PINCHWIFE.

Hold your peace, I won't.

D

MAR-

(18)

MARGERY.

Why, love?

PINCHWIFE.

I'll tell you.—

ALITHEA.

Nay, if he tell her, she'll give him more cause to forbid her, I'll answer for't. *[Aside.]*

MARGERY.

Well, now, tell me why, Deary?

PINCHWIFE.

First, you like the actors; next, the gallants may like you.

MARGERY.

What, a homely country girl? as I am?—no, no, bud, nobody will like me.

PINCHWIFE.

I tell you, yes, they may.

MARGERY.

No, no, you jest—I wont believe you: I will go.

PINCHWIFE.

Then I tell you, once for all, that one of the wildest fellows about town, who saw you there, told me he was in love with you.

MARGERY.

Indeed! who was it? pray now, who was it?

PINCHWIFE.

I've gone too far, and slipt before I was aware;—how overjoy'd she is!

[Aside.]

MAR-

MARGERY.

Was it the gentleman in blue and silver, who took such care of me while you went for the coach?—or was it some of our *Hampshire* neighbours? I promise you, I am vastly beholden to him.

PINCHWIFE.

I promise you, you lye; for he wou'd but ruin you, as he has done hundreds.

MARGERY.

Ay, but if he loves me, why should he ruin me? Answer me that: methinks he shou'd not, I wou'd'nt do him any harm.

ALITHEA.

Ha, ha,—a choice couple they are, indeed! [*Aside.*]

PINCHWIFE.

'Tis very well, but I'll keep him from doing you any harm, or me either—look, here comes company, get you in, get you in, I say!

MARGERY.

But pray, husband, is he a pretty Gentleman that loves me?

PINCHWIFE.

In Baggage, in—

MARGERY.

I'd give any thing in the world to know now.

[*He thrusts her in.*]

PINCHWIFE.

What, all the libertines of the town brought to my lodging, by this easy coxcomb!—'Sdeath! I'll not suffer it.

Enter

Enter Sparkish and Harcourt.

SPARKISH.

There *Harcourt*, there she is!—salute her. [*Harcourt salutes her.*] Do you approve my choice? Dear little Rogue, I told you I'd bring you acquainted with my Friends, the Wits.

PINCHWIFE.

Ay, ay, they'll all know her, as well as you yourself will, I warrant you. [*Aside.*]

SPARKISH.

This, my pretty rogue, is one of those *bon vivants*, who are to dance at your wedding to-morrow; and him you must bid welcome to whatever you and I have.

PINCHWIFE.

Monstrous! what a speech. [*Aside.*]

SPARKISH.

Harcourt! how dost like her? humh?—Nay, now, dear, don't look down; I should hate a wife of mine to be out of countenance at any thing.

PINCHWIFE.

Wonderful!

[*Aside.*]

SPARKISH.

Tell me, I say, *Harcourt*, how dost like her?—hey? egad, thou hast star'd upon her enough, to resolve me, I'm sure.

HARCOURT.

So infinitely well, that I cou'd wish I had a Mistress too, that might differ from her in nothing,—but her love and engagement to you.

ALL—

ALITHEA.

Mr. Sparkish, Sir, has often told me his friends were wits and Ralliers, and now, I find it true.

SPARKISH.

No, by the universe, no, he don't rally now ; you may believe *him*, I do assure you ; he is the honestest, worthiest, truest-hearted fellow in the world, *Frank* is !—

[*Embraces him.*]

HARCOURT.

Sir, you are obliging beyond expression.

PINCHWIFE.

The serpent ! How he twines about him !

[*Aside.*]

SPARKISH.

Nay, i'gad, I am sure you *do* admire her, extremely, I see't in your eyes—He does admire you, madam.—By the world, he does ; don't you ?

HARCOURT.

Yes, above the world, or the most glorious part of it, her own Sex : And, till now, I never thought I should have envied you, or any man, about to marry ; but you have the best excuse for marriage I ever knew.

ALITHEA.

Now, Sir, I'm convinced you are a wit, since you can't spare your friend, even when he is but too civil to you ;—but the surest sign of it is, your being an enemy to marriage ; for that, I hear, you hate, as much as business or bad wine.

HARCOURT.

Truly, Madam, I was never an enemy to marriage till now ; because marriage was never an enemy to me before.

ALI-

ALITHEA.

But how, Sir, is it an enemy to you now? Because it robs you of your friend here?

SPARKISH.

No, hang it, don't repine at that, *Frank*—come, give me thy hand, boy? For all my wife there, that is to be, thou shalt enjoy me sometimes, dear rogue!—By my honour, we men of wit condole for our deceased brother in marriage, as much as for one dead in earnest: I think that was prettily said of me,—ha, *Harcourt*?—Oh, come, *Frank*, don't be melancholy for me.

HARCOURT.

No, I assure you, I am not melancholy for you.

SPARKISH.

Then, prithee, deal justly and tell me, dost think my wife, that shall be, there, a fine person?

HARCOURT,

I could gaze upon her, till I became as blind as you are!

PINCHWIFE.

That's home; if the puppy can feel it [Aside.

SPARKISH.

How, as I am? How d'you mean?

HARCOURT.

Because you are a lover, you know? And all true lovers are blind, stock blind.

SPARKISH.

Oh, ay, ay; true; I didn't think o'that!—but by the world she has wit too, as well as beauty: Go, go with her

her into a corner, and try if she has wit ; talk to her, any
any thing ; she's bashful before me !

ALITHEA.

Sir, you dispose of me a little before your time.——

[*Aside to Sparkish.*

SPARKISH.

Nay, nay, madam, let me have earnest of your obedience, I insist, or—— go, go madam—I beseech you?—
Try, her, *Frank*, try her.——

[*Harcourt courts Alitheia aside.*

PINCHWIFE.

How, Sir ? If you are't concern'd for the honour of
a wife, I am for that of a sister ; he shall not debauch her
here ! What, bring men home to her, let 'em make love
before your face, and thrust 'em into a corner together ? Is
this your town wit and conduct ?

SPARKISH.

Ha, ha, ha, a silly wife rogue wou'd make one laugh
more than a stark fool ! Ha, ha ; O, I shall burst ! I shall
burst ! Nay, you shan't disturb 'em, that's pos.—I'll vex
thee, by the world !

[*Struggles with Pinch. to keep him from Har. and Alith.*

ALITHEA.

'Tis too late, Sir.—The writings are drawn, and settle-
ments made, past all revocation.

HARCOURT.

Then, so is my death.

ALI-

ALITHEA. *Has he said a word to me?*
I wou'd n't be unjust to him.

HARCOURT.
Then why to me, madam?

ALITHEA.
I have no obligation to you, Sir.

HARCOURT.
My love.

ALITHEA.
I had his before.

HARCOURT
You never had it ; he wants, you see, jealousy, the only infallible sign of it.

ALITHEA.
Love proceeds from esteem ; he cannot distrust my virtue ; besides, he loves me, or he wou'dn't marry me.

HARCOURT.
Marrying you is no more a sign of his love, than bribing your woman, that he may marry you, is of his generosity.

ALITHEA.
But, Sir, to end the dispute, I must marry him, or my reputation will suffer in the world.

HARCOURT.
No ; madam, with your pardon, your reputation will suffer in the world, if you *do* marry him, and you will be thought in necessity for a cloke,

ALI-

ALITHEA.

Now you are rude, Sir.—Mr. Sparkish, pray, come hither, your friend here is very troublesome, and very loving.—

HARCOURT.

Hold, hold, dear creature, hold— [Aside to Alithea.]

PINCHWIFE.

D'ye hear that?

SPARKISH.

Why d'ye think I'll seem to be jealous, like a country bumpkin?

PINCHWIFE.

No; rather be a cuckold, like a credulous cit.— This fellow is the flower of all true town fops, such as spend their estates before they come to 'em, and are cuckolds before they are married!—But let me go look to my my own little freehold. [Exit.]

HARCOURT.

Sure, madam, you wou'd not have been so little generous, as to have told him?

ALITHEA.

Yes, Sir, since you cou'd be so little generous as to wrong him.

HARCOURT.

Wrong him? No man can't do't, he's beneath an Injury;—a bubble, a coward, a senseless idiot,—a wretch, so contemptible to all the world but you, that—

E

ALI-

ALITHEA.

Nay, then I'm bound to tell him, you are not his friend?
—Mr. Sparkish, Mr. Sparkish.

SPARKISH.

My dear—what, what?—Now dear rogue, has'nt she
wit?

HARCOURT.

Not so much as I thought, or hoped she had.
[Speaks furiously.]

ALITHEA.

Do you bring people, Sir, to rail at you? —

HARCOURT.

Madam! —

SPARKISH.

Oh, that my dear!—Never mind that! If he *does* rail
at me, 'tis but in jest, I warrant him—'Tis what we wits
do for one another in common, and never take the least
notice of it.

ALITHEA.

But he spoke so scurrilously of you, I had'nt patience to
hear him; besides, he has been making love to me.

HARCOURT.

True, dam'd, tell-tale woman.

[Aside.]

SPARKISH.

Pshaw! To shew his parts, Love;—we wits rail and
make love often, but to shew our parts;—as we have no
affections, so we have no malice;—we—

ALI-

ALITHEA.

He said, you were a wretch, below an injury——

SPARKISH.

Nothing at all !

ALITHEA.

A common bubble——

SPARKISH.

Words o'course !

ALITHEA.

A coward——

SPARKISH.

Pshaw, pshaw !

ALITHEA.

A senseless, drivelling idiot——

SPARKISH.

——A what ?

ALITHEA.

An idiot !

SPARKISH.

How ! did he disparage my parts ?—Nay, then, my honour's concern'd !—I can't put up that, by the world ! I may draw now, before my mistress, since I'm sure we shall be parted.

[*Aside and offering to draw.*

ALITHEA.

Hold, hold !

SPARK-

SPARKISH.

Can't, upon my soul !—A fool ! I'll be the death of him !

ALITHEA.

Hold, I say—to tell the truth, the gentlemen said, after all, that what he spoke, was but out of friendship to you.

SPARKISH.

What? say, I was a fool (that is) no wit, out of friendship to me !

ALITHEA.

Yes, to try whether I was concern'd enough for you ;—and made love to me, only to be satisfy'd of my virtue, for your sake.

HARCOURT.

Kind however that? [*Aside.*

SPARKISH. [*Puts up his sword.*

Oh, if it were so, that indeed alters the case, my dear rogue, I ask thee pardon, with all my soul ; but, why would not you tell me so at first ?

HARCOURT.

Faith, because I did not think on't at first !

SPARKISH.

(*Pulling out his Watch.*) Gadso!—The happy hour approaches !—Don't you long for't, dearee?—I know you do.—Come, *Frank*, we'll leave her to contemplate on her felicity a-while, then return to the celebration of our joys !—Adieu, ma Chere !—Adieu.

ALI-

ALITHEA. — Sir, before you go, I must take the freedom to request, that that gentlemen may not be present at our marriage; for, whether his addresses were in earnest or not, they were too importunate not to give me some uneasiness.

SPARKISH.

Well, well; I—a—I consent, what wou'd you have me do, *Harcourt?*

HARCOURT.

Madam, it is equally impossible for me to disobey, as it is to cease admiring, you; but, this, at parting, I must call my friend to witness, that I am determined to shew the same regard, I ever have, for him; and, I here intreat you to reward him, as one possess'd of such qualities deserves.

[*Exit one way, Alithea another.*]

SPARKISH.

Upon my soul, he's the honestest generoufist, fellow ever breath'd.

[*Exit after him.*]



A C T II.

ALITHEA *rising from her Toilet as new dressed.*

ALITHEA.

I Am sick of all this preparation!—Here have I dress'd and set myself out with ornaments, essence, and Pulville, for no other purpose, but as people decorate and perfume a corpse; to be carried to a second-hand grave; for such I begin

begin to think Mr. *Sparkish's* bed!—then, let me ask myself seriously, why do I make such a sacrifice to the will (or rather, avarice) of a brother?—*he* has made the match, and thinks me bound, in justice, to fulfil it;—In justice? Where lies the justice, either to myself or him, in giving away my person without my heart?—Yet, let me not be rash, who knows, but Mr. *Sparkish* may have good qualities enough to engage it after marriage?—Ah! I fear, that marrying to increase love, would be like gaming to become rich—only make one loose the little stock we had before!

Enter Sparkish and Dorilant, with Harcourt disguised as a Parson.

SPARKISH.

Dress'd like a goddess, by all the Gods!—*Dorilant!* come in, come in, boy!—A happy day to you, madam! and to us all!

HARCOURT.

Amen!

ALITHEA.

[*Looking first at Dorilant, then at Harcourt*] Who have we here, Sir?

SPARKISH.

This? [*meaning Dorilant*] a friend of mine, dearest, who is to give you away,—and this, my chaplain.

ALITHEA.

Your Chaplain?

SPARKISH.

Ay, little *George Harcourt*, of Cambridge, *Frank's* brother.—you didn't forbid *him*, tho' you did *Frank*?—poor fellow?

fellow?—he desired me, ma'm, to remember his humble service to you, and to tell you, that (in obedience to your commands) he has refrain'd coming into your sight!

ALITHEA.

Refrain'd, coming! why is n't that he?

SPARKISH.

Oh, fie!—nothing like him,—that is,—I mean, a little perhaps,—very little,—just in size, or so, but not in countenance;—he was recommended to me,—George was,—by his brother, to be my chaplain, and that too, as a proof of his never having intended to interrupt our match!

ALITHEA.

Astonishing!—Why sure, Sir, you wou'd not rob me of my senses?

SPARKISH.

Look you there, Doctor,—I told you she'd suspect you,—*Dorilant*, now, isn't it true?—I appeal to you,—Is'nt this *Frank Harcourt's* brother?

ALITHEA.

Sir, 'tis ungenerous in you to call upon your friend for such a testimony.

DORILANT.

Madam, I assure you, that—

ALITHEA.

O, Sir, you may spare yourself the apology, since it is n't my request!

SPARK-

SPARKISH.

Why this is really extraordinary! passing sentence without trial?

ALITHEA.

Not so, Sir,—if you have any proofs, of what you now so confidently affirm, declare 'em?

SPARKISH.

Why, Ma'm, I'll tell you the whole story;—*Frank Harcourt*, when he was taking leave of me to-day, and presenting his devoirs to you, (which he did most respectfully, I assure you) ask'd me, if I had provided a parson?—I told him, not absolutely, (as at that time, was really the case) whereupon, says he, I have a brother in town, who is in orders, and will be proud to be your chaplain.—I cou'd do no less, you know, than receive the compliment;—so away goes he, in the most affable, good-natur'd manner in the World, and sent him, as you see.

ALITHEA.

That is,—*Frank* goes home, puts on a demure look, a grizzle bob, and a black coat; then comes back, and tells you he is *George*, and you believe him!

SPARKISH.

No, no,—hold you there, hold you there, my dear! I tell you, they were twins, *George* and he.—And, by the same token, the midwife put her garter about *Frank's* neck, to know 'em asunder, they were so very like!

ALITHEA.

What, *Frank* told you that?

SPARK-

SPARKISH.

Yes, and Ned there, too, the same ; they are both in a Story, I promise you ?

ALITHEA.

I believe it.—Such absurdness and Credulity ! [*Aside.*]

SPARKISH.

Nay, if you won't believe me, only look at him ?—

DORILANT.

Yes, Ma'm only look upon him ?—

ALITHEA.

I do, Sir, and see his design too thoroughly. [*Aside.*]

DORILANT.

And can you blame him for't ? [*Aside.*]

SPARKISH.

You see what a sneaking college look he has, and a canonical smirk !

ALITHEA.

'Tis time to end this farce, for I am tir'd of fooling !
—Come, most reverend doctor, do, put an end to it at once.

HARCOURT.

With all my soul, divine, heavenly creature ; whenever it shall please you.

ALITHEA.

He speaks like a chaplain, prodigioufly !

SPARKISH.

Ay, wasn't there "soul, divine, and heavenly" in what he said ?

F

ALI-

ALITHEA.

I tell you, Mr. Impertinent black Coat, that this dull trick o'yours won't pass; and, tho' you may delay our marriage——

HARCOURT.

Far be it from me, munificent patroness, to delay your marriage; I covet nothing more than to marry you this very instant, which I might do, if you yourself would;—for my noble, good-natur'd and thrice generous patron here would'nt hinder it.

SPARKISH.

Who I?—not I, by the world,—you're sure o'me!

HARCOURT.

Then, let me, tell you, plainly madam, that no-body else shall marry you—By heaven, I'll dye first; for I am sure I shall die after it.

ALITHEA.

That was spoken, too, like a chaplain, was n't it?

SPARKISH.

Oh, upon my honour, he takes it heinously to be refus'd;—and, really, I can't blame him.— Can you, Dorilant?

DORILANT.

Not I, I own.

SPARKISH.

Such an indignity, it appears!—Come, come, he shall marry us.

ALI-

ALITHEA.

Well, Sir—if you are so blind, as not to see thro' this bare-fac'd imposition, take the consequence!—One thing I must apprise you of; which is, that, since you have wilfully led me into the snare, I now confess before ye all, that that gentleman may marry one of us, but he shall never marry both. *[Exit.]*

HAR. Charming creature!

DOR. Victoria, my boy, Victoria! } *Aside.*

SPARKISH.

Then, one thing I must apprise her of;—which is, that he shall marry one of us, and both of us too, or none of us;—so come along, my little Domine Doctor!—*Dorilant*, where are you? *Exeunt.*

S C E N E, *A Chamber, with a Table and Chairs.**Enter Mr. and Mrs. PINCHWIFE.*

PINCHWIFE.

Come, now we are alone, tell it me again, I say?

MARGERY.

Lord, why I have told it you a hundred times, hav'nt I?

PINCHWIFE.

I would try, if, in a repetition of the tale, I could find her altering the least circumstance; for, if her story be false, she is so too *[Aside.]*—Come, how was it?

MARGERY.

What pleasure you do take to hear it!

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

No, no; 'tis you that take a pleasure in telling it,—
so begin!

MARGERY.

Why,—first of all,—as I said, he—he kiss'd his hand to
me, as I sat on the bench, and made me a low bow—

PINCHWIFE.

Well?

MARGERY.

So then, I got up, and made him a curtesy.

PINCHWIFE.

You did?

MARGERY.

Yes, in good manners, bud!—You know, one would'nt
be uncivil?

PINCHWIFE.

So?

MARGERY.

About a minute or two afterwards, comes up to me one
of those gentlewomen, who have fruit and oranges in their
hands, and beg'd of me, to be so kind as to eat some?

PINCHWIFE.

Very well, and did you?

MARGERY.

Yes, bud!—For she was so civil, that she would make
me eat, whether I would or no; and then there were nice
sweetmeats mix'd along with 'em!

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

Well, and what follow'd?

MARGERY.

Why she look'd earnestly under my hat while I was eating (as hard as ever she could look) and cry'd out, "Oh bless your bright eyes," says she, "For they're worth a whole cluster of diamonds!"

PINCHWIFE.

Oh, rare!

MARGERY.

And, when she saw me hide my face and blush, she said, "Don't turn away, sweet creature!—You can't be so cruel as to kill him, I'm sure!"

PINCHWIFE.

To kill whom, did she mean?

MARGERY.

I ask'd her who, for I did not understand her, at first!—Why, "That gentleman," says she, pointing to Mr. —(I don't know his name, yet) "whom you have wounded so, that he's almost ready to dye!" "Lord!" says I, "me wound? I would n't have hurt him for the whole uniyarsal world".—"So," says she, "I told him." With that, she beckon'd the gentleman towards us;—and, would you believe it? By that time he came over the benches to me, he was perfectly cur'd, and as well, as ever he was in all his life before.

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

That engine of the devil ! How she moulded her !—But, tell me, who was by when this happen'd ?

MARGERY.

Oh, nobody, nobody, but ourselves ; for the people were all gone away ;—so then, he sat himself down by me, to take care of me !

PINCHWIFE.

The careful scoundrel !—what, they *both* sat down ?

MARGERY.

No, bud, not both ; —for he told her, that her sister wanted to speak with her, and so she went away.

PINCHWIFE.

She did ?—Damn her for't—And he was very civil, I warrant ?

MARGERY.

Oh, yes ; as kind as any thing ; for he took me close round the waist, and kept looking at my necklace, and feeling it to know, whether it was garnet or no ;—then he offered me a fine green ring, that he had, to keep ; and try'd it upon my middle finger, while he kiss'd my hand, over and over, a thousand times !—I thought he would have sat it !

PINCHWIFE.

And, did you sit still all the time ?

MARGERY.

Yes, for I was afraid to stir.—You would n't have had me sit with him, would you ?

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

Eternal cankers gnaw his lips off?—And—and—what else?—Come, you are a good girl, speak out, freely.

MARGERY.

You,—ah,—you'll be angry, if I tell you all?

PINCHWIFE.

No, I won't.

MARGERY.

—I'm sure, you will?

PINCHWIFE.

Indeed, I won't.—(I'm in a cold sweat) [*Aside.*]

MARGERY.

Why—he—he,—I vow, I'm afraid to tell you?

PINCHWIFE.

But, I say, you may tell me, any thing, any thing—

MARGERY.

Why, he—he—took—

PINCHWIFE.

What?

MARGERY.

He took—my—

PINCHWIFE.

What, I say?—Out with it?—(What a lingering death I dye)

MARGERY.

—He took—my scarlet ribband from my breast, which you gave me, and said, he'd keep it, for my sake.

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

Oh, is that all? I thought he might have push'd his victory a little further. *[Aside.]*

MARGERY.

And so, then—then you came back, Bud.

PINCHWIFE.

Ay, and 'tis well I did, I find!—It's plain she loves him, yet has'nt wit enough to conceal it!—But the sight of him will encrease her aversion to me and love for him; and that very love instruct her how to deceive me, all idiot as she is.—Love? Why, ay; 'twas he first gave women their craft. Out of nature's hands they came plain, open, silly, and fit for slaves, as she and heav'n intended them: but, damn'd love—well—I must strangle that little monster, while I can deal with him, ——— *[Aside]*
Go, fetch pen, ink and paper out of the next room!

MARGERY.

Yes, Bud.

(Exit.)

PINCHWIFE.

[Alone.]

Why shou'd women have more invention in love than men? It can only be, because they have more desires, more solliciting passions, more hell, and more of the devil.

Re-Enter MARGERY.

Come, minx, sit down and write.

MARGERY.

Ay, dear bud;—but I can't do's very well.

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

I wish you cou'd n't at all !

MARGERY.

But, what shou'd I write for ?

PINCHWIFE.

I'll have you write a letter to your lover.

MARGERY.

O Lud,— to the fine gentleman, a letter ?

PINCHWIFE.

Yes, “ to the fine gentleman,” as you call him.

MARGERY.

Ah—you jeer ;—sure, you do but jeff ?

PINCHWIFE.

I am not so merry, so, come, write as I bid you.

MARGERY.

Why, what, d'you take me for? do you think I'm a fool ?

PINCHWIFE.

She's afraid I shan't dictate any love to him, therefore is unwilling ; [*Afide*]—but, you had best begin.

MARGERY.

Indeed, and indeed, but I won't, so I won't.

PINCHWIFE.

Why ?

MARGERY.

Why, because he's in town, and you may send for him, if you will.

G

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

Oh rare!—is it come to this?—what, you would have him brought to you, would you?—I say, take the pen and write, or you'll provoke me.

MARGERY.

Lord, what d'ye make such a fool of me for—Don't I know that letters are never writ, but from the country to *London*, and from *London* into the country?—Now, he's in town and I am in town too!—Therefore I can't write to him, you know?

PINCHWIFE.

Oh, I'm glad its no worfe! If she had known how to correspond, I find, she'd not have been long idle!—However, all's well hitherto!—[*Aside.*]—But, I say, you *may* write to him, tho' he *is* in town, if your husband bids you; especially, as I shall carry the letter myself.

MARGERY.

Oh! may I so?—O,—well—then I am satisfy'd.

PINCHWIFE.

Come, begin—" *sir.*"— (*Dictates.*)

MARGERY.

Shan't I say, " *dear sir?*" you know one always says something more than bare, " *sir.*"

PINCHWIFE.

Write as I bid you, or I'll write strumpet with this pen-knife in your face.

MAR-

MARGERY.

Nay, good bud—" *sir,*"— [Writes,

PINCHWIFE.

" *Tho' I suffer'd last night your nauseous loath'd kisses and
" embraces*"—write!

MARGERY.

Why, why should I say so?—I'm sure he'd a sweet
breath!

PINCHWIFE.

Write——

MARGERY.

Only let me put out "*loath'd,*"——

PINCHWIFE.

Write, I say;—or else——

MARGERY.

Well then,——(If I must, I must) [Writes.

PINCHWIFE.

Let's see, what have you writ?— [Takes the paper and
reads]—" *tho' I suffer'd last night your kisses and embraces.*"
Thou impudent creature, where is "*nauseous and loath'd*?"

MARGERY.

I can't abide to write such filthy words. [Rises.

PINCHWIFE.

You can't?—Once more, write as I'd have you, or
I'll spoil thy writing for ever with this :—I'll stab out those
eyes, that are the cause all my mischief.

[Holds up the penknife.

MARGERY.

O lud, I will, I will; bud!—I will— [Sits down again.
PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

——Let's see, now?—— [Reads.
“Tho’ I suffer’d last night your nauseous loath’d kisses and
“embraces.” very well, go on——“yet I wou’d not have
“you presume that you shall ever repeat them.”——

MARGERY.

I have writ it!

PINCHWIFE.

“For, what I then endur’d, was all from fear, not
“choice;——

MARGERY.

So?

PINCHWIFE.

——“But, now, that I am out of your hands.”——

MARGERY.

So?

PINCHWIFE.

“I think fit to acquaint you of this my resolution.”——

MARGERY.

So?

PINCHWIFE.

——“That you may, for evermore, cease to pursue her,
“who hates and detests you.”

MARGERY.

So—h—h!

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

What, do you sigh?—"detests you—as much as she
 "loves her husband and her honour."

MARGERY.

—I vow, husband, he'll ne'er believe that I should
 write such a letter!

PINCHWIFE.

What, he'd expect a kinder from you, hey?—Come,
 now, your name, your name only?

MARGERY.

What, shan't I say, "your faithful humble servant till
 "death?"—Nor nothing?

PINCHWIFE.

Tormenting fiend, no;—her stile, I find wou'd be very
 soft.—Come, now wrap it up while I go fetch wax and
 a candle. [*Going, he turns about.*]—and, d'you mind,
 write on the out-side, "For Mr. Dorilant." [*Exit.*]

MARGERY.

Oh deary me!—I could leap out of my skin for joy!—
 I am glad he has told me his name;—dear Mr. Dorilant,
 but why should I send thee such a letter? that will vex thee,
 and fret thee,——and make thee angry with me——well,
 I won't send it—ay, but then my hus' and will kill me—
 for I see plainly, he won't let me love Mr. Dorilant;—
 but what care I for my husband.—I won't, so I won't, send
 poor Mr. Dorilant such a letter!—but then, my hus-
 band—oh—but what, if I writ at bottom, my husband
 made me write it;—ay, but then my husband wou'd see't.

—Can

have had a hundred presently.—Stay—what if I shou'd write a letter, and wrap it up like this, and write upon't too : ay, but then my husband might chance to open and see't—I don't know what to do—but yet i-fegs, I'll try, so I will ; for I won't send this letter to poor Mr. Dorilant, come what will ——— Now, now for't—

[Takes fresh paper.

“ Dear-sweet Mr. Dorilant,”—so—

(She repeats as she writes.

“ My husband wou'd have me send you a base, rude, unman-
 “ nerly letter—but I won't”—so—“ and would have me for-
 “ bid you loving me—but I won't”—so—“ and wou'd have
 “ me say to you, I hate you, poor Mr. Dorilant.—But I
 “ won't tell a lye for him”—there—“ for I'm sure, if you
 “ and I were in the country at cards, together”—so—“ I
 “ could not help treading on your toe under the table”—so—
 “ or rubbing knees with you, and staring in your face till you
 “ saw me”—very well—“ and then looking down, and blush-
 “ ing for an hour together”—so—“ but I must make haste be-
 “ fore my husband comes. And now he has taught me to
 “ write letters, you shall have longer ones from me, who am,
 “ Dear, dear, poor dear Mr. Dorilant,
 “ your most humble friend, and
 “ servant to command, till death,
 “ Margery Pinchwife.”

So—now wrap it up just like t'other—So—now, write
 “ For Mr. Dorilant.” Oh charming ! But now ! What
 shall I do with it ? For here comes my husband !

Enter PINCHWIFE.

PINCHWIFE.

I have been detained by a prating coxcomb of a fellow,
 like Sparkish, who pretended a visit to me ; but I fear 't was
 only

only to my wife.—[*Aside.*]——Well ; 'have you done ?

MARGERY.

Yes, Bud ; just now.—

PINCHWIFE.

Let's see't ;—what d'ye tremble for ?—What, you wou'd not have it go ?

MARGERY.

Yes, I would, [*He opens and reads the first letter.*] So, I had been finely serv'd, if I had given him this. [*Aside.*

PINCHWIFE.

Come, where's the wax and seal ?

MARGERY.

Lud, what shall I do now ?—I have it— [*Aside.*
Pray let me see't.

PINCHWIFE.

Gi' me the wax ?

MARGERY.

No, let me see it ?——Lord, you think me so errant a fool, I can't seal a letter !——I will do't, so I will.

[*Snatches the letter, changes it for the other, seals, and delivers it to him again.*

PINCHWIFE.

Nay, I believe you will learn that, and other things too, which I would not have you.

MARGERY.

So, han't I done it curiously ?—I think I have.——
There's my letter going to Mr. Dorilant ; since he'll needs have me send letters to folks ! [*Aside.*

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

Very well : but, now I warrant, you wou'd n't have it go at last ?

MARGERY.

Indeed, and indeed, but I wou'd, bud !

PINCHWIFE.

Well, then you are a good girl.——Come, retire to your chamber till I come back [*Exit Margery.*] and d'you here be sure you come not within three strides of the window when I am gone, for I have a spy in the street. At least, 'tis fit she thinks so—if we don't cheat women, they'll cheat us ; have secured all within, I'll deal with the foe without, with false intelligence !——

[*Holds up the letter.*]

Enter SPARKISH.

SPARKISH.

Oh, here he is !—Pox on't, we've been waiting for you these two hours ?——Where's your wife ?

PINCHWIFE.

Poh, no matter for mine, where's yours, ' that is to be ?' as you phrase it.

SPARKISH.

Rat me, if I can tell you ;—she's in a—in short—there's a—little kind of a—*fracas* !

PINCHWIFE.

A-what ?—what do you mean ?

SPARK-

SPARKISH.

Why, I mean, that I—a—that she—(that is)—Upon my
soul, I can't tell what I mean, rightly!

PINCHWIFE.

(The blockhead!)[*Aside*].—Where is she?

SPARKISH.

In the next room; where we've been all waiting to con-
clude the business!—

PINCHWIFE.

Then, follow me, I'll lead you to your wishes! [*Exit.*]

SPARKISH.

And thou art a most extraordinary guide, that's certain!

SCENE, A Chamber.

ALITHEA, HARCOURT and DORILANT.

HARCOURT.

It is beyond my hopes, madam! To draw you into a
confession of love for me; but, could I only prevail on you
to reject that coxcomb, I were happy!

ALITHEA.

Whatever my inclinations are, Sir, I shall never suffer
any body to lay a restraint upon my conduct!

HARCOURT.

Far be it from my thoughts!—I only dar'd to—

H

Al

ALITHEA?

A few minutes will resolve your doubts! Thus much, I promise you—that—

HARCOURT.

What?—Speak, dear Angel!—For my destiny is on your tongue?

ALITHEA.

—My brother's presence shall determine all.

DORILANT!

Do you retire a while, and leave the game to me.

[To Harcourt]

Enter Sparkish, with Pinchwife, who, seeing Dorilant, starts.

PINCHWIFE!

Is it possible?—Or is't a phantom only?

HARCOURT.

Oh, flesh and blood, I warrant him!

[Aside, as he goes out.]

SPARKISH.

Hey-day! What's this?

PINCHWIFE.

But, 'tis no matter;—a public humiliation is his due, and, he shall have it, without abatement.

SPARKISH.

[Introducing Dorilant to Pinchwife]—Ned Dorilant, my friend, Sir—an honest, open-hearted fellow as lives.]

PINCH-

PINCHWIFE.

Sir, we are no strangers to each other! —

DORILANT.

I hope not, Sir, 'tis my desire to be better known to you?

PINCHWIFE.

Sir, you are known sufficiently already —

DORILANT.

I don't understand you, Sir?

SPARKISH.

Nor I, by the world!

PINCHWIFE.

— I mean, Sir, to recommend you properly to me.

DORILANT.

Sir, you are infinitely obliging!

SPARKISH.

Poh, pox of all these compliments! — Where's *Margery*, my sister-in-law? — We want her, to compleat the set?

PINCHWIFE.

I know you do; — and its rather unlucky, to be sure; — for that gentleman's sake, that she should be absent now.

DORILANT.

For mine, Sir? — Why mine, in particular?

PINCHWIFE.

PINCHWIFE.

Oh, Sir, you know my meaning ; I'm sure you do ?
“ Perhaps you don't remember me ? ”

DORILANT.

Indeed, Sir, but I do, very well ; however you may
sneer !

PINCHWIFE.

“ No *Italian* husband can play the guardian better
than I. ”——

DORILANT.

Sir, you are pleasant, I own.—

PINCHWIFE.

Nay, Sir !——

DORILANT.

But, irony is a dangerous weapon ;—so, I advise you to
take care how you handle it, for your own safety.—

PINCHWIFE.

Sir, I have a better weapon here, whenever I see cause to
use it. (Pointing to his sword.

DORILANT.

Then, now's the time, for your insolence requires it !—

(Draws.

SPARKISH.

Hold, hold, *Dorilant*, hold !—Consider the lady—my
wife, that is to be.—

PINCHWIFE.

[Sneeringly] Dear sir, don't be so rash ?—You'll soil the
scarlet ribband that's upon the hilt.

Dg-

DORILANT.

How?

[*looks confus'd*]

PINCHWIFE.

—Then, what'll my wife say?

DORILANT.

[*Aside*—A plague confound her tongue!—The pretty
Idiot! To go tell it *him*!

PINCHWIFE.

What, Sir, chap-fall'n?—Oh, don't be discouraged
I've wherewithal to raise your spirits! My wife, Sir, presents
her compliments to you with this!—there, Sir!

[*Gives him Margery's Letter*]

DORILANT.

And there, Sir, [*throws it upon the ground*] I treat it, as
I would you, and her, and every insult—with contempt!

SPARKISH.

Nay, by the world it shan't pass so!—we'll know the
contents, that's poz!

[*Takes it up.*]

ALITHEA.

'Tis my sifter's hand.

PINCHWIFE.

Read out, Sir,—'tis for the public ear—out with it?

SPARKISH.

Hem, hem, “*To Mr. Dorilant.*” Ay, you are the
identical man, sure enough; I'll make oath of that.

SPARK-

DORILANT.

[*Aside.*] What an ass shall I look like !

PINCHWIFE.

Begin, Sir, the gentleman's impatient.

SPARKISH.

Hem, " Dear, sweet Mr. Dorilant.

[*Turns to Dorilant and winks.*

PINCHWIFE.

How's that, Sir?—Oh, I saw your innuendo, but it won't do;—Stick to the text, I insist?

SPARKISH.

I will. " Dear, sweet Mr. Dorilant." That is the text; upon my honour;—and a very good one too.—

DORILANT.

This puppy's attempt to be witty, will increase my shame. [*Aside.*

SPARKISH.

" My husband would have me send you a base, rude, unmannerly Letter,—but I won't.—"

PINCHWIFE.

What's this?—I say, Sir, that I must be satisfied of this.— [*Offering at the Letter.*

SPARKISH.

[*Keeping him off.*]—At a Distance, with all my heart.—

DORI-

DORILANT.

Oh, Sir, I'll vouch the authenticity. — Go on. —
" 'tis for the public ear." — you know?

PINCHWIFE.

Stop, Sir.

DORILANT.

Go on. —

SPARKISH.

Let's see. — Unmannerly letter, but I won't, — well

"and would have me forbid you loving me, — but I won't." —

Good! Well said Margery! — she won't.

PINCHWIFE.

The Devil!

DORILANT.

She won't, you hear, Sir. — Go on.

SPARKISH.

"And would have me say to you, I hate you, poor Mr. Do-
rilant." — (Poor Mr. Dorilant.) — "But I won't tell a lie
for him!" That's right!

PINCHWIFE.

Th' infernal, dy' dissembler!

SPARKISH.

Ay, Eve was the same. — For I'm sure if you and
"I" — (Mind.) — "were in the Country, at Cards to-
"ther, —

PINCHWIFE.

In hell together.

DORILANT.

DORILANT.

Oh, "don't be discouraged," cheer up; You've "rais'd
my Spirits," I assure you.

SPARKISH.

"I cou'd not help treading on your toes, under the table."

—[titters.]—Gadso, She's frolicksome, Margery
is!

PINCHWIFE.

'Tis forg'd, —'tis magic, —'tis impossible.

SPARKISH.

Don't interrupt me, I say. — "Or rubbing knees with
"you, and staring in your face, till you saw me, then look-
"ing down, and blushing for an hour together."

PINCHWIFE.

I'll —

SPARKISH.

Hush, be quiet!

DORILANT.

Ha, ha, ha!

SPARKISH.

— "But I must make haste, before my husband comes;
"And, now he has taught me to write letters" —

ALITHEA.

Mind, that brother! That's a town-document, You
know? [Aside.

SPARKISH.

"You shall have longer ones from me, who am —

"Dear, dear, poor dear Mr. Dorilant,

Your most humble friend and servant

"to command, 'till death,

"Margery Pinchwife."

SPARK-

'pon my soul, a pretty epistle; and the very first love-letter that ever was without flames, darts, fates, destinies, and lying in it, since the creation!

(Pinchwife *snatches the letter, looks at it, and tears it.*)

ALITHEA.

What,—dumb, brother?

PINCHWIFE.

I shall burst—choke with rage—let me sit down——

[*Throws himself upon the settee.*]

DORILANT.

Ay, ay, work on;—a stubborn child should always have the rod?—But, now for *Harcourt's* business? [*Aside.*]

SPARKISH.

Gadso!—What's become of little Domine?—Where's my little chaplain?—Why *George*?—*Dorilant*, let's you and I go seek him—I must find him out faith; or it'll be past the canonical hour. [*Exeunt Sparkish and Dorilant.*]

ALITHEA.

[*Sitting down by Pinchwife*]——Come, brother, be composed a little—and, for once, give a woman leave to speak?—You've seen the folly, by this time, I presume, of resting your happiness upon that slender reed, *simplicity*! But, believe me in this?—So well I know my sister's heart, that I can assure you her present frailty is more the offspring of *that foible*, than it is of a vicious appetite.

PINCHWIFE.

——I have no words, to answer you.

ALITHEA.

Would ye be happy together? Take my advice?—Release her from her bondage; let her associate with the in-

I

nocent

nocent and sensible of both sexes; and improve that mind, which has hitherto been too un-informed to defend itself from the attacks of its own passions, or from those of others.

PINCHWIFE.

Alithea, you are in the right—I am convinc'd!—I am bound to you for ever!—I know, your tenderness for me won't let you be severe in reproof; but, I feel a thousand stings within myself!—How could I reasonably expect happiness, when I was destitute of every requisite that should form it? Similitude of years, tempers, manners; and, in short, all the qualities that can endear a heart, and warm it into love!

ALITHEA.

Nay; now, you are too rigorous against yourself!—'Tis practicable yet;—and, since what's done cannot be undone; e'en manage it, as you would an unlucky cast of the dice; where, judgment in play will, a good deal, compensate for the badness of the throw!—To speak in plainer terms;—let your knowledge (which has been improved too by experience) be gently used to regulate her conduct, and its influence may make ye both happy still!

[*Enter Harcourt behind, having overheard them.*]

HARCOURT.

Excellent woman!—What an accomplished mind, and form, she has!

[*Aside.*]

SPARKISH, *without.*

Why, *George*, my little *Georgibus*!—why, where the deuce can he be gone?

HARCOURT.

Now comes the fiery trial!

[*Aside.*]

Enter.

Enter SPARKISH and DORILANT.

SPARKISH.

Egad, he's sneak'd off in the very nick!—Oh, no;—here he is, *in quærpo!*—And, by the bye, the storm's all blown over, I see!—There seems to be a tolerable clear sky.

PINCHWIFE.

There is, Sir, without a chance of its being disturb'd again!—As to you, Sir—[*to Dorilant*] I shan't stoop to compliment you with any panegyrick on your *morals*; but only say, that the folly of my own behaviour has been so great, its robs me of all power to resent yours; [*Dorilant is going to answer*] There needs no reply, Sir;—If you please, we'll drop the subject for ever.

SPARKISH.

I've found out my sister *Margery* too, in her cage, and she's coming, immediately——

PINCHWIFE.

The devil, she is! [*Aside.*]

ALITHEA.

Hift! not a syllable to her, I insist!—leave her to my documenting—— [*Aside.*]

PINCHWIFE.

I am school'd!—— [*Aside.*]

ALITHEA.

——That is, if you dare trust me? [*Aside.*]

PINCHWIFE.

Oh, I am a wretch! [*Aside.*]

(Pinchwife joins Sparkish and they walk away together)

(Then enter MARCERY.)

MARGERY.

MARGERY.

Deary me ! If my letter has'nt brought Mr. *Dorilant*, already,—P'fegs, that's pure !—Now for't.

DORILANT.

[*Aside, and taking Harcourt by the hand*].—Success to you, from my soul, *Frank* !—But, as my staying (after what's past) would only occasion fresh jealousies, I think it prudent to retire !—You'll call at my lodgings ?

HARCOURT,

I will.

DORILANT.

[*To Alithea*].—Madam, I am most sincerely mortified at having incurred *your* censure, above all ; but good fortune may, at some future time, permit me to retrieve my character, and merit from you a better opinion.

[*Bows respectfully and exit.*]

MARGERY.

What, is he gone without so much as speaking to me ? or looking this way ?—Sure, he is'nt in love with *her* ! [*Aside*]

SPARKISH.

Come,—to the point, to the point ;—friends and bridegrooms all !—to the point.—Madam,—are you willing to resign your hand ?

ALITHEA.

I am, Sir.

SPARKISH.

Oho,—*She's* come to reason, too, at last.—This is an auspicious hour—[*Aside*].—*Dorilant*, where's *Dorilant* gone ?—Egad there's always one body out of the way or another, I think,—

MARGERY.

MARGERY.

Why he went away just now, without speaking a single word.—I'm afraid that somebody has vex'd him.

PINCHWIFE.

[*Aside pointing at Margery.*]—D'you hear that?

ALITHEA.

No matter.—'Tisn't time yet,——Patience, brother.

[*to him.*]

PINCHWIFE.

Come, Sir,—His absence shall be no hindrance; for I'll give her away.

ALITHEA.

And I would choofe it so.

HARCOURT.

How my heart flutters, till the decision comes! [*Aside.*]

PINCHWIFE.

Your hand, sister.

ALITHEA.

I give it——*here.*

[*To Harcourt.*]

SPARKISH.

——Madam!——

ALITHEA.

——To this gentleman, Sir,—whose character, good sense and perseverance have deserved that esteem from me, which your caprice has forfeited.

HARCOURT.

Transcendent goodness!

MARGERY.

[*Staring at her.*]——My gracious! Marry the parson!

SPARKISH

SPARKISH.

Forfeited?—why, pray, Ma'm!—I—a—a—forfeited!
—why, what language is she talking of, I wonder?

ALITHEA.

The language, Sir, of *Love*; which, I believe, you
never heard me talk before?

SPARKISH.

By the world! I am at an absolute loss to know whe-
ther my senses are perfect!

ALITHEA.

Not the least impair'd, Sir, from what they were, I can
testify for you.

PINCHWIFE.

'Tis nobly done, Sister; and I applaud your justice—
Now, leave the rest to me? [*Aside.*]

SPARKISH.

Poh, poh, poh—come, no more words, nor delay.—
this's all *Bagatelle*!—Take care, Domine.—Stand out of
the way, a little——

HARCOURT.

No, Sir, 'tis time to throw off the mask, when this
lady authorizes it—[*throws off his disguise*!—She is the
ruling planet!—and we must all obey her!

SPARKISH.

Planet!—by the world! there can be no planet rule
here but the moon, I'm sure, by our disorder.

MARGERY.

Well, this is as like the play I saw last night, as any
thing can be, in the world! [*Aside.*]

PINCHWIFE.

PINCHWIFE.

Hark you?—A word with you, *Sparkish*,—*takes him aside*—You are a man of the town?—Of wit, I mean?

SPARKISH.

I grant it ; agreed, agreed.

PINCHWIFE.

Then, support the character,—be yourself!—Consider this, as the levity of her sex ; and treat it with a *Gaiete de Coeur*, that preserves your pride from a defeat!—

SPARKISH.

You're right!—You're right, I'll do't.

PINCHWIFE.

Look upon't, as a meer shifting of the wind! —

SPARKISH.

I do!

PINCHWIFE.

—As an ill run o' Dice.—

SPARKISH.

I do, I do.

PINCHWIFE.

— and go through the form of a surrender, with as much tranquillity and coolness, as if 'twere a transference of so much stock.—

SPARKISH.

I'll do't;—but then my broker was a damn'd rogue, you'll remember that?—(*points to Harcourt, then joins the company.*)—Madam,—and you, my friend, *Frank*,—if you are *Frank*?

HARCOURT.

(6)
HARCOURT.

That you canst own, Sir, by my discovery!

SPARKISH.

O, bravo!—egad, very well!—very well, by the world!
—I honour you for the pun!—heh,—Madam!—I say,—
since the Brilliancy of your wit—has overpower'd the
lustre of mine; and (in some measure) eclips'd my pe-
netration;—why I sincerely congratulate you upon the
victory!—I wish you both an Inundation of happiness!—
and, for the future, will never disparage my parts again,
by making love to any Woman, while I live.—Was
that right? (to Pinchwife.)

PINCHWIFE.

With the spirit of a Roman!

(to him.)

HARCOURT.

Then all parties are pleas'd.—

ALITHEA.

And, brother,—since we are become Adventurers alike
on the wide ocean of *Matrimony*, let us both endeavour to
steer skilfully! 'tis a fresh gale, and a smooth sea that we
set out with; but, should storms and tempests arise, we
must all mutually assist each other, in the weathering of
them.—so, henceforth,

No more let anxious doubts o'er love preside,

But gen'rous confidence be virtue's guide!

Those wives are chastest, whom independence charms,

Those husbands happiest, whom no fear alarms.

F I N I S.



